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Notes and Opinions.

Professor Huxley and Biblical Study.—All readers of Professor Huxley's less technical essays know that his severe criticism of Dr. Wace and Mr. Gladstone (so much of which an unprejudiced person must declare to have remained unanswered by his opponents) represents but one aspect of his general position. Another and more irenic aspect is to be seen in his *Episcopal Trilogy*, with its frank admission of a common ground, tenable both by religious teachers and by scientists of his own class. His interest in the Bible was, however, by no means limited to the production of essays intended to break down a mechanical theory of inspiration and an arrogant ecclesiasticism. His *Life and Letters*, recently published by his son Leonard Huxley, shows clearly a personal acquaintance with and a discriminating appreciation of at least portions of the Scriptures that might well be shared by many clergymen. In fact, when about fifty years of age, he took up the study of Greek, as his son believes, that he might study the New Testament in the original. His general familiarity with both Old and New Testaments appears in the repeated allusions and quotations with which his later correspondence abounds. It is true that these are not always introduced with the seriousness that marks a treatise upon theology, but there is nowhere a trace of flippancy. In fact, as he wrote the secretary of a free-thought association in declining membership in the organization, "heterodox ribaldry disgusted him rather more than orthodox fanaticism." Nor was this a mere matter of taste. In a letter to Charles Kingsley in 1863 he declares that he has "by nature and disposition the greatest possible antipathy to all the atheistic and infidel school." He recognized clearly the great rôle played by the Bible in the formation of contemporary morals, and in 1870, while a member of the school board, championed the use of the Bible in elementary schools. He insisted, however, that biblical instruction should not be doctrinal, but "purely grammatical, geographical, and historical in nature." At a later day he expressed the opinion that children "ought to know 'the mythology of their time and country,' otherwise one would at the best tend to make young prigs of them; but as they grew up their questions should be answered frankly." For Jesus and what he calls "Nazarenism" Professor Huxley had the greatest

respect, but, as he wrote Mr. Knowles in 1889, he believed that "Christ was not a Christian." This statement may be explained by another of the same year, that "the church founded by Jesus has *not* made its way; has *not* permeated the world; but *did* become extinct in the country of its birth, as Nazarenism and Ebionism"—a bit of history that would puzzle most historians, but is no more remarkable than other statements in the same letter (II, 243) and in that to Rev. Estlin Carpenter (II, 282). With his characteristic desire to bring his own discoveries to the minds of the people, during the last of his life he planned a course of "Workingmen's Lectures on the Bible," with the following subjects: (1) "The Subject and the Method of Treating It;" (2) "Physical Conditions: the Place of Palestine in the Old World;" (3) "The Rise of Israel: Judges, Samuel, Kings as far as Jeroboam II.;" (4) "The Fall of Israel;" (5) "The Rise and Progress of Judaism: Theocracy;" (6) "The Final Dispersion;" (7) "Prophetism;" (8) "Nazarenism;" (9) "Christianity;" (10) "Muhammedanism;" (11) and (12) "The Mythologies." Debarred by his failing voice from undertaking these lectures, Professor Huxley was planning at the time of his death to put the substance of what he would have said into a Bible history for young people. What would have been the characteristics of this volume, had it been written, it is not hard to surmise. Probably, as a piece of constructive work, its value would have been small. Professor Huxley conceived his duty to be that of clearing the ground for other men. Yet, perhaps for this very reason, he cannot be neglected by the biblical student. Unless the professional and amateur religious teachers of today are able to meet his objections to historical Christianity and square their doctrine of Scripture to the facts he has adduced, they had best despair of attracting to the church the support of scientifically trained men and women. There is no better introduction to the difficulties inherent in verbal inspiration than Professor Huxley's debate with Dr. Wace, or his criticism of Mr. Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*.

The Hebrew Ecclesiasticus as an Antidote to Criticism.—The *Homiletic Review* for January, 1901, contains an article by Professor Margoliouth, of the University of Oxford, upon "Old Testament Criticism in Its Relation to Teaching." Professor Margoliouth, it seems, until within a short time had no hope for supposing that destructive criticism would ever be answered, but recently he has discovered evidence which, in his estimation, is to prove fatal to the entire critical school. This evidence is somewhat unique. It will be

remembered that a few years ago Professor Schechter, of Oxford, discovered in Cairo a Hebrew manuscript of Ecclesiasticus. Since that time Hebraists have been discussing whether or not this represents the original text of the book, or is a late Hebrew translation. The general consensus of opinion has been in favor of the former view, but among its strenuous opponents has been Professor Margoliouth. By degrees the entire question of criticism seems to have become identified in his mind with that of the genuineness of this Cairo manuscript. Having convinced himself that the manuscript is false, he has lost faith in all modern critical methods. The eleventh-century rabbis showed more sense, in his estimation, in flinging the manuscript into the waste-paper basket than do the modern higher critics in accepting it as genuine. The chief basis of this superior insight of the rabbis he holds to be their acceptance of the supernatural in the Scripture—a belief which, in his estimation, “sharpens our critical methods rather than blunts them.”

This certainly is an easy way in which to deal with the critics—first identify their cause with some definite problem, then differ with men who are writing upon the problem, and then despair of criticism in general! Staking all upon Ecclesiasticus, will Professor Margoliouth return to his former faith if the MS. should finally be proved to contain a genuine text? But, after all, should one allow one's self to hold it necessary that a pyramid should stand upon its point?

As to Subterfuges in Exegesis.—Professor Thayer, of Harvard Divinity School, in a paper recently published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*—a paper which, by the way, is an admirable illustration of its own teaching—says as regards a current interpretation of a difficult parable: “Loyalty to the truth forbids us to betake ourselves to any subterfuges or evasions.” These words should be the motto of every student of the Bible. There, if anywhere, a man should be honest. The first step that anyone should take is to answer the question: “What did the writer of this passage really mean?” If the thought thus acquired be true, then one can accept it; if it be not true, then one will reject it. To attempt to discover meanings in Scripture which one believes to be true is not to interpret, but to pervert. Apologetics must follow, not precede, exegesis. There is many a theological reconstruction now going on which is fatally handicapped by disregard of this fundamental necessity, and the root of its trouble is an unwillingness to face the actual thought of the biblical writer. Too many men are endeavoring to save a theory at the expense of their honesty.